



National Park Service

As steward of America's natural and cultural heritage, the National Park Service (NPS) is dedicated to conserving the resplendent landscape and historic treasures of the National Park System, for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of this and future generations.

Since its establishment by Congress in 1916, the National Park System has evolved into a magnificent conglomeration of 369 areas, covering 83 million acres of land in 49 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa. The Park System's diversity is reflected in more than 20 classifications of park units, including national parks, monuments, battlefields, military parks, historical parks, historic sites, lakeshores, seashores, recreation areas, scenic rivers and trails. In July, 1995 the Korean War Veterans' Memorial became the newest addition to the National Park System, paying tribute to Americans and others who sacrificed and served with bravery and determination to preserve freedom in South Korea.



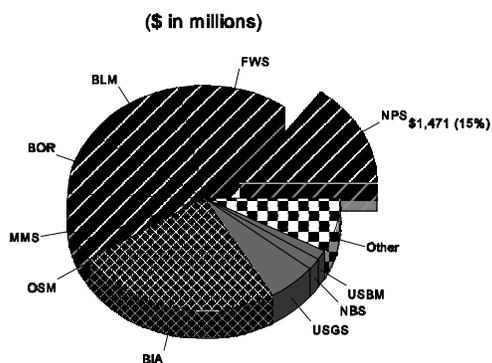
Korean War Veterans' Memorial. Photo credit - Eric Eisenstein.

THE NPS CHALLENGE

Today, the National Park Service is confronted with complex challenges. In an era of budgetary constraints and rising expectations, the Park Service is expected to do more with less, make difficult choices, work more efficiently and effectively, and be more accountable. In 1995, the NPS embarked on an aggressive agenda of reorganization, streamlining, and reengineering, to rethink the way it conducts business and to achieve more efficient management of diminishing funding. When completed, the reorganization will result in a 30 percent reduction in central office staff with estimated savings in excess of \$30 million. This will allow the Park Service to target its resources to the field units where they are most needed.

Figure 6

1995 National Park Service Budget Authority



Total DOI Budget Authority - \$9,744 million

"In God's wilderness lies the hope of the world -- the great fresh unblighted, unredeemed wilderness."

John Muir, *Alaska Fragment*, 1890

Heart of the Rockies Adventure Program

The **Heart of the Rockies Adventure Program** provides opportunities for students to access Rocky Mountain National Park as an extended classroom. The program promotes authentic outdoor learning experiences to help students develop a commitment to the future of the national parks. The program has gained national recognition for its innovative approach and for its cost effectiveness.

Having begun with grants from the National Park Foundation, Pew Charitable Trusts, and the National Park Service, the **Heart of the Rockies** program has trained over 400 teachers since 1992 to use the Park as an extended classroom, using curriculum materials developed in partnership with local educators. The curriculum materials, which received awards from the National Association for Interpretation in 1993 and 1995, help teachers present "hands-on" activities to their students in their home classrooms and at Rocky Mountain National Park. Teachers who have been trained in Rocky Mountain's curriculum have received over \$6,000 in mini-grants from the Park since 1993 to help defray transportation costs.

Heart of the Rockies has a special program that targets under-served elementary students from the Denver inner-city. This effort uses local high schoolers to teach the elementary students about the natural resources of the Park. This unique effort by the high school students was recognized by Interior Secretary Babbitt during a 1994 visit to Rocky Mountain.

The **Heart of the Rockies** program has served over 19,000 students from 130 schools since 1992. It has done so at an average cost of 14 cents per visitor activity hour, which is considerably cheaper than many visitor services offered by the Park. **Heart of the Rockies** serves as a model for environmental education, and was the subject of a 1995 documentary by Louisiana Public Broadcasting which was broadcast to teachers in 28 states. The program will be featured again in the spring of 1996 when Hawaii Public Television highlights the involvement of high school students with the under-served elementary schools.



Students from an under-served elementary school in Denver, Colorado, learn about the mountain building episodes in Rocky Mountain National Park. Photo credit - National Park Service.

encroachment of development into historic scenes, and by inappropriate visitor use. The stewardship of natural resources -- including wildlife, fisheries, vegetation, habitat, air quality, scenic vistas and water resources -- requires that we know what and where our resources are, their current condition, and how to maintain them, as well as how to protect these precious, often irreplaceable resources.

The Park Service has established a resources management framework by defining a basic set of 12 inventory data needs and establishing a Servicewide program to oversee its acquisition. To develop effective and cost-efficient ecosystem monitoring, a network of 10 prototype monitoring programs has been implemented. In 1995, work on four prototypes -- in Denali, Channel Islands, Shenandoah, Great Smoky Mountains -- began and a cluster program was initiated, comprising six small grassland and prairie units in the Great Plains.

A high priority of the Natural Resources program is to identify and compile all natural resource studies that have been completed into an easily usable and updated automated data base. This effort was initiated in 83 parks in 1995, bringing the total number of parks that have undertaken this effort to 181.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Resources are being imperiled every day in numerous ways -- by acid rain that degrades the quality of air and water, by toxins contained in agricultural runoff which pollute lands and water, by mining and oil and gas drilling operations which fragment native habitat, by the

In 1995, the National Park Service played a key role in developing the Native Plant Conservation Initiative, a public/private collaboration that emphasizes a multi-species, multi-agency, ecosystem approach to plant conservation. Several private organizations have joined to work on plant conservation actions, public education, research, and data needs. This initiative will serve the NPS and other agencies as more effective means to conserve native plants.

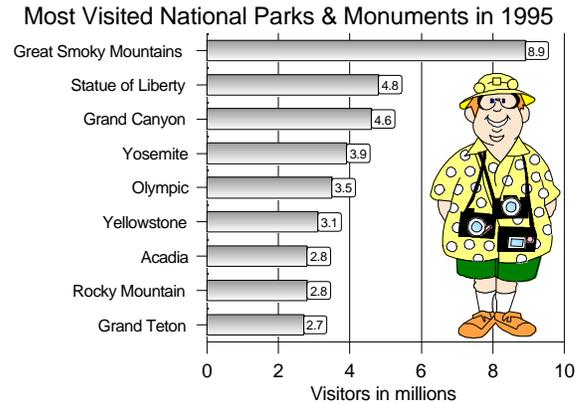
The South Florida ecosystem contains nationally and internationally significant natural resources, in addition to supporting local tourism, agricultural, and fishing industries. The National Park Service, in a joint effort with state and local governments, the Seminole and Miccosukee Tribes and other organizations, is working to restore the natural hydrologic function of the Everglades. In 1995, the NPS was able to acquire almost 5,000 acres at Big Cypress and Everglades National Park for restoration and preservation. Additionally, the NPS secured \$4.8 million to transfer to the State of Florida to assist in protecting land resources which are adjacent, but external, to park boundaries.

VISITOR SERVICES

Our national parks welcomed an estimated 270 million visitors in 1995. Nearly 295,000 buses entered park units and there were over 17 million overnight stays. Overall, NPS visitation has increased at an average of one percent per year since 1990.

Individual park experiences help people gain a sense of place and a stronger sense of our collective national history and identity. Most importantly, the forging of emotional, intellectual and recreational ties encourages people to take greater responsibility for protecting this heritage and ensuring it will be passed on to future generations.

Figure 7



In 1995, 79 million hours of interpretation and education programs were presented. The array of services provided included 540 staffed information and orientation stations; 16,000 guided tours through parks, caves, archaeological ruins and historic buildings; 10,000 historical demonstrations; 6,000 on-site school programs and 8,000 off-site community education programs.

Park rangers and the U.S. Park Police work to ensure the safety of visitors and employees as well as the protection of resources. In 1995, there were over 16,000 resource violations -- crimes ranging from poaching to collecting and damaging wildlife, plants, minerals and fossils. Nearly 5,000 search and rescue missions were conducted at a cost of nearly \$4 million, and there were more than 5,000 serious law enforcement incidents. In addition, NPS emergency medical personnel responded to nearly 26,000 incidents.

LEADERSHIP INTITIATIVES AND PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

The NPS plays a leadership role in the national program of public and private preservation of America's historic, cultural and natural heritage and integration of preservation values in public and private decisions. The NPS has statutory responsibility for partnership programs to assist other Federal agencies, state, and local governments, the private sector and individuals with the identification, evaluation, registration, and protection of irreplaceable historic and archaeological resources.

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's cultural resources worthy of preservation, including all historic areas of the NPS, National Historical Landmarks, and other places significant to the nation, states, or communities. Nearly 65,000 properties are listed in the National Register, which incorporates nearly one million historic and archaeological resources. In 1995, 1,537 new properties were added to the National Register, 24 preliminary nominations were reviewed, and 66 new determination of eligibility requests were processed.

PARK FEES

Entrance fees and recreation user fees for campgrounds and other activities are charged at nearly 170 national parks. In 1995, fee receipts totaled \$80.5 million, of which 15 percent was retained by the NPS to help offset collection costs. The balance of receipts may be appropriated by Congress for operations in the following year. Entrance fees are collected for both vehicles and individuals entering parks, and range from \$4 to \$10 per non-commercial vehicle and \$2 to \$5 per person. Several studies have concluded that the visiting public is willing to pay higher fees as long as those fees are used to fund parks directly and yield tangible recreational or resource



The badlands of Rainbow Forest in Petrified Forest National Park, Arizona, contain extraordinary weather-worn rock formations. Photo credit - National Park Service.

benefits.

Many visitor services, including food, lodging, and various other services are provided by concessionaires under contract with the Park Service. Currently, there are 661 concessionaires operating in 129 Park Service units. Concessionaires contributed \$19 million to the general fund of the Treasury in 1994 (the most recent year for which data is available), and expended \$12 million in special improvements in lieu of franchise fees. The Vice President's National Performance Review recommended improvements in the Park Service's concession management and concession contract structure to improve services and generate higher franchise fees. The Park Service has begun adopting these recommendations by negotiating increased fees as concessionaire contracts are renewed and by pursuing legislative changes.

MAINTENANCE

The physical plant of the Park Service comprises approximately 15,000 buildings, 8,000 miles of roadways, 1,400 bridges and tunnels, 5,200 employee housing units and 1,500 water and sewer systems. While there has been increased funding for overall maintenance in recent years, deferred maintenance in parks remains a serious problem.

The National Park Service has, by necessity, undertaken new construction of facilities without sufficient funds to properly maintain them. Parks have experienced increased visitation, longer seasonal use, more vandalism, and higher costs for utilities, supplies, and materials. Finally, using maintenance equipment beyond its designated life expectancy has also contributed to the shortfall in operational maintenance. In 1995, park operational maintenance costs totaled approximately \$271 million. Regional maintenance project costs (defined as nonroutine or nonrecurring) totaled \$54 million in 1995. It is estimated that the Park Service has backlogs of \$400 million of repair and rehabilitation projects; \$1.7 billion in prioritized construction projects; \$1.3 billion in road projects; and \$2.7 billion in unprioritized construction projects.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

During 1995, the NPS published its second “report card” on how well the Park Service is serving its primary customers. This report, entitled *Serving the Visitor, 1995*, contains two kinds of information. The first is baseline data on 12 important visitor services, from park personnel to campgrounds and picnic areas. The data is taken from surveys conducted during 1988-1992 in 34 parks. Over 15,000 visitors are included. Overall, these visitors rated 74 percent of park services as good or very good.

The second kind of information is current data on the same services. The information is taken from surveys conducted during 1993-1994 in 18 parks. Over 8,000 visitors are included. Overall, these visitors rated 77 percent of park services as good or very good, which reflects an increase of 3 percent compared to the first survey. Figures 8, 9 and 10 depict selected survey results from the report.

Figure 8

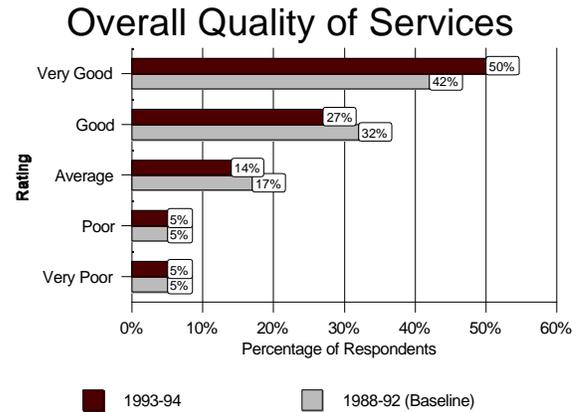


Figure 9

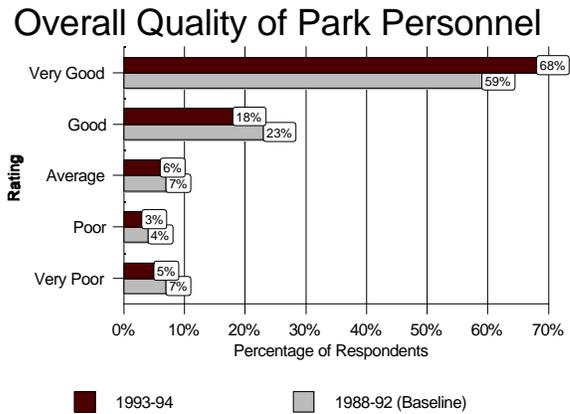


Figure 10

